

Remarks

Claims 1-6 of the present application have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Bruehl, et al, U.S. Pat. 4,895,240. Responsive to the rejection, Applicants have amended independent claim 1 as well as dependent claim 3 to more precisely define the invention, and have made amendments to the remaining claims as appropriate. It is believed that the claims as presently presented are allowable over the art of record.

As now claimed, the present invention embraces a handrail drive that has a single, axially-driven, drive wheel and a press-on roller construction which is aligned with the point of engagement of the drive wheel with the handrail. These features distinguish the present invention from the construction of Bruehl, et al, and are not suggested thereby.

Bruehl, et al discloses a handrail drive in which a plurality of relatively small drive wheels 26 contact the handrail. The drive wheels are located in spaced pairs, and idler or press rollers 28 are positioned between the drive wheel pairs. As shown in the Figure, the press rollers cause significant distortion of the handrail between the drive rollers. This flexure work is absorbed by the handrail and can lead to premature aging. In the present invention, the press-on rollers are located directly opposite the point of contact between a single drive roller and the handrail, thus significantly decreasing handrail distortion. The use of a single drive wheel is similarly neither taught nor suggested by the reference.

In addition, each of the drive wheels in Bruehl, et al is driven peripherally through contact with the upper traction surface 10 of the cog links 6. The present invention requires the drive wheel to be driven centrally, by an axle. Then, given the nature of the construction disclosed in Bruehl, et al such a configuration, in addition to not being shown by the reference, is also not suggested, as the peripheral drive through the cog links is at the heart of the invention.

Dependent claim 3 has been amended to recite that the drive wheel has a peripheral surface that adapts to the form of the hand rail outside with which it is engaged. This feature also is neither taught nor suggested by Bruehl, et al, which is entirely silent on the nature of the traction rollers. Working in conjunction with the opposed placement of the press-on roller means, such a surface configuration of the present invention minimizes distortion to the hand rail, thereby extending its life.

The Examiner has also indicated that U.S. Patent No. 6,199,698 as listed on the Information Disclosure Statement of 7/15/2004 has not been considered, as it appears to be an incorrect patent number. Submitted herewith is a Supplemental IDS Form, correcting the patent number to 6,199,678. As a copy of the '678 patent is of record, having been submitted with the previously-filed IDS, it is believed that no fee is required.

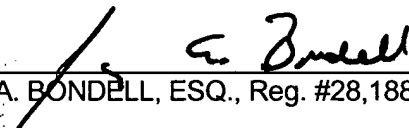
Withdrawal of the rejections and passage to allowance is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.8(a)

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on March 4, 2005.

Carol L. Wood, Sender

